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Theory of Spencerian Penmanship

IVISON BLAKEMAN TAYLOR & CO.

NEW YORK AND CHICAGO.

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THEORY

OF

SPENCERIAN PENMANSHIP

FOR SCHOOLS AND PRIVATE LEARNERS.

DEVELOPED BY

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS,

WITH PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

DESIGNED TO BE STUDIED BY PUPILS IN CONNECTION WITH THE USE OF THE SPENCERIAN COPY-BOOKS.

BY

THE "SPENCERIAN AUTHORS."

PUBLISHED BY
IVISON, BLAKEMAN, TAYLOR & CO.,
NEW YORK AND CHICAGO.

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

WRITING is almost as important as speaking, as a medium for communicating thought. For this reason it is said that "Writing is a secondary power of speech, and they who cannot write are in part dumb." Scrawls that cannot be read may be compared to talking that cannot be understood; and writing difficult to decipher, to stammering speech.

Theory directs, and Art performs; therefore inform the mind and train the hand. If you would attain high excellence in Penmanship, you must master the principles, and faithfully practice them.

SIGNALS.

COMMENCING AND CLOSING WRITING EXERCISE.

Remarks.—In every properly conducted school, the writing exercise is commenced and closed in an orderly manner. The following plan is suggested, but it will, of course, be modified by the teacher as circumstances may require.

Pupils should obey the signals silently and promptly.

The teacher can frame special questions, and give the necessary drill to secure the desired order.

The signals may be given by bell, tap, or by counting, at the teacher's discretion.

OPENING.

1. *Position at Desk.*
2. *Arrange Books.*
3. *Find Copy and adjust Arms.*
4. *Open Inkstands.*—In double desks the pupils on the left (the pupil's right) will open and close inkstands.
5. *Take Pens.*

☞ At this point the teacher should pay *particular attention to giving instruction in penholding.* When ready to write, give the order to TAKE INK.

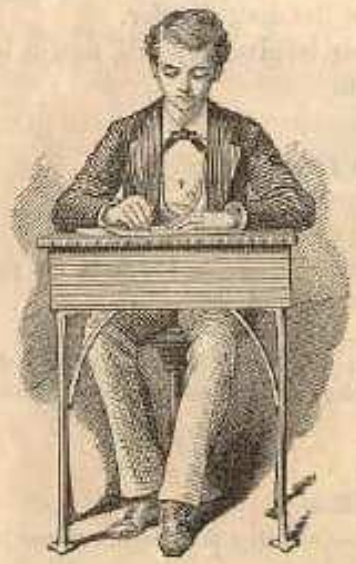
CLOSING.

6. *Wipe Pens.*
7. *Front Position.*
8. *Pass Pens.*—Collecting them in the *reverse order* of their distribution.
9. *Pass Books.*—Books are to be collected in the *reverse order* of their distribution.
10. *Close Inkstands.*

POSITION.

POSITION FOR WRITING.

Remarks.—The position for writing should be a convenient one, allowing the easy action of the right arm and hand. In sitting at a desk or table there is little choice between what are known as the "Left-side," "Front," "Right-oblique," or "Right-side" positions. They are all practiced by writers; but it is well for the sake of order and uniformity in a class that all the pupils should observe the same position. Whichever method is adopted, those who do not wish to become hollow-chested or round-shouldered, should learn to sit easily upright, and keep the shoulders square.



As the free use of the hand mainly depends on the manner of holding the pen, the *correct* method only should be learned, and persevered in until it becomes habitual and easy.

FRONT POSITION AT DESK.

1. Will you please describe and assume the Front Position at desk?

Sit directly facing the desk, near to it, without leaning against it, with the feet level on the floor, and the fore-arms resting lightly on the desk in front at right angles to each other. Let the right arm rest lightly on the muscle forward of the elbow—keep the wrist above the paper, and rest the hand lightly on the nails of the third and fourth fingers, which should touch the paper directly under the palm. Adjust the book so that the right arm will be at right angles to the lines on which you are to write. Hold the book in place with the fingers of the left hand.

NOTE.—The "Left side Position" varies from the "Front" in having the left side inclined toward the desk, and in placing the arms and book on the desk further to the right, so as to bring the right arm at right angles to the edge of the desk. This position is the most favorable for writing on large books which cannot be turned obliquely.

RIGHT-SIDE POSITION.

2. Will you please describe and assume the Right-side Position at Desk?

Turn the right side near to the desk, but not in contact with

MOVEMENTS.

Remarks.—The venerable PLATT R. SPENCER, originator of the Spencerian System of Writing, said: "Our intention has been to present to the public a system,

"Plain to the eye, and gracefully combined,
To train the muscle and inform the mind."

The training of the muscles of the arm and hand, by appropriate movement exercises, *must* be attended to. For, however distinctly a letter may be pictured in the mind, the execution of it on paper at all times depends on the control the writer may have over the muscles of the arm and hand. The *will* communicates its directing power through the numerous little telegraphic nerves, which descend from the brain—the direct organ of the mind.

In first attempts at writing, the muscles may not properly perform what the mind directs, but by frequent and careful practice they are rendered supple and obedient in the execution of every variety of form.

4. How many different movements may be employed in writing?

Four: Finger Movement, Fore-arm Movement, Combined Movement, and Whole-arm Movement.

FINGER MOVEMENT.

5. Will you assume the writing position, describe the Finger Movement, and make it?

The Finger Movement consists in the action of the first and second fingers and thumb, and is used chiefly in making the upward and downward strokes.

EXAMPLES. *n n n*

NOTE.—This movement should at first be made with the dry pen, as indicated in the cut; at the same time deliberately naming the strokes: Upward, Down-

ward, Upward, or one, two, one, &c., &c. The Finger Movement alone is too limited for free writing; but will be found useful in combination with the Fore-arm Movement, as will be shown.

FORE-ARM MOVEMENT.

6. Assuming the writing position, will you describe the Fore-arm Movement, and give an example of it?

The Fore-arm Movement consists in the action of the fore-arm upon its muscular rest near the elbow; the hand gliding on the nails of the third and fourth fingers. It may be employed in making strokes in any direction. Examples:

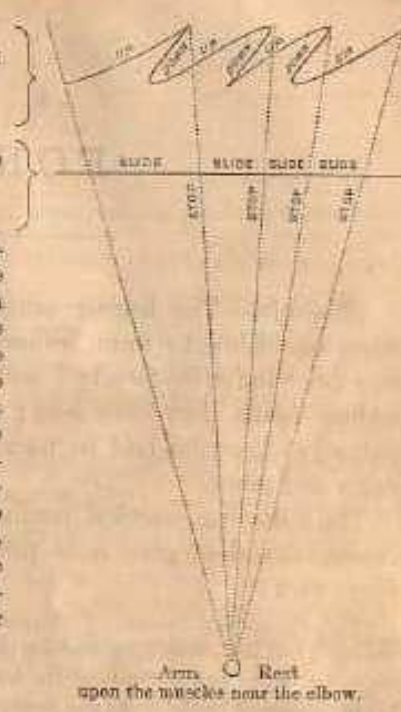
NOTE.—This movement may be made as indicated by the cut, naming the strokes, thus: Fore arm, Fore-arm, &c., or counting, 1, 2, &c., &c. The Fore-arm Movement is specially adapted to carrying the pen rightward, and leftward, across the paper, and is most efficient in combination with the Finger Movement, as will be shown. It is, however, used exclusively by some excellent penmen; the fingers and wrist being held firmly, to check their independent action. When so used the tips of the third and fourth fingers move in lines corresponding to those produced at the point of the pen.

COMBINED MOVEMENT.

7. Assuming the writing position, will you describe the Combined Movement and give an example?

The Combined Movement consists in the united action of the fore-arm, hand and fingers, the fore-arm acting on its muscular rest as a centre, and sliding the hand on the nails of the third and fourth fingers, while the first and second fingers and thumb extend and contract in forming upward and downward strokes.

NOTE.—The combined movement may be first practiced by tracing the combined forms upon the page of Movement Exercises, or any convenient copy line, observing to use the fore-arm power in sliding the hand across the paper. This movement answers the requirements of business use better than any other: it combines the free untiring sweep of the fore-arm, with the delicate shaping powers of the fingers, securing ease and accuracy.



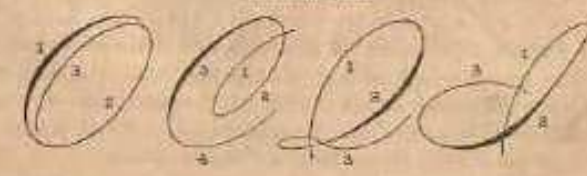
The accompanying diagram illustrates with tolerable accuracy the simultaneous action of the forearm and fingers, which constitutes the combined movement. Although the special office of the forearm is to transport the pen from left to right horizontally across the page, and the special part of the fingers is to execute the oblique upward and downward lines; yet, in practice, the two forces combine and assist each other. The forearm, particularly, will give to the fingers its firm, steady sympathy in the performance of their part.

WHOLE-ARM MOVEMENT.

8. Assuming the writing position, will you describe the Whole-arm Movement, and give an example of it?

The Whole-arm Movement consists in the use of the whole arm from the shoulder, the elbow being raised slightly from the desk, and the hand sliding on the nails of the third and fourth fingers.

EXAMPLES.



NOTE.—The above capitals may be traced with the Whole-arm Movement, and the strokes regulated by counting, as indicated by figures. This movement is mainly used for striking large capitals. Its practice is highly beneficial, as it brings into free action all the muscles from shoulder to fingers.

FORM.

Remarks.—The learner must have clear conceptions of the letters he wishes to form, before writing them. A few persons have the "imitative faculty" well developed, and can easily reproduce forms they have seen; but most need to measure, to analyze, to describe, and to trace, before they can copy with accuracy and grace.

The following practical testimony on the subject is perfectly conclusive, and we give it in preference to any further remarks of our own:

"The Spencerian System of Penmanship was adopted by the Board six years ago, and its introduction was the commencement and the sole cause of a new and a better era of teaching the art of writing. Teachers, at first favorably prepossessed by the grace and beauty seen in all its forms, soon discovered that the most beautiful and artistic penmanship is susceptible of a full and definite analysis; that its elements, taken separately, are so simple that a child can comprehend them, and that they can be arranged, taught, and combined gradually and progressively, until a handwriting as perfect as the models in the text-book rewards the efforts of teacher and pupil. They learned from this system that teaching or learning to write is a mental as well as a mechanical process; that there must be thought as well as motion; that the prototype of every letter and every line, its exact form and proportions, must be so distinctly impressed upon the mind, that it can be described in precise and intelligible language before the hand attempts to execute. Where penmanship is taught in this manner success becomes a mathematical certainty. I have seen the copy-books of entire schools filled up with faultless penmanship, not a single one that was not superior to the best that was produced before the introduction of this system; and an oral examination upon the subject in such schools will interest as much as any exercise on the programme for examination day."—*From Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Schools of Washington, D. C., November 14, 1871. Hon. J. Ormond Wilson.*

True theory and careful persistent practice are the means by which all may learn to write, with scarcely a limit to the degree of excellence. After a good handwriting is attained, and its use becomes habitual, letters, words and sentences will flow from the

ready pen, with scarcely a thought on the part of the writer as to the manner of executing them.

9. What is a line?

The path of a moving point.

NOTE.—These definitions relate to Penmanship and not to Mathematics.

10. How many kinds of lines are used?

Two.

11. Will you name them?

Straight lines and curved lines.

12. Will you tell how to make a straight line, and give an example?

To make a straight line, the point of the pen or pencil must be moved without change of direction.

EXAMPLE.

13. Will you tell how to make a curved line, and give examples?

To make a curved line, the pen must be moved with a continuous change of direction.

EXAMPLES.

14. How many different kinds of curved lines, and what are they called?

There are two kinds of curved lines. They are called the *Right Curve* and the *Left Curve*.

15. Will you describe a right curve, and make one?

A right curve bends to the right of a straight line, connecting its extremities.

EXAMPLE.

16. Will you describe a left curve, and make one?

A left curve bends to the left of a straight line, uniting its extremities.

94. What four letters do we call Semi-extended?

The

95. Why are these letters called semi-extended?

Because, as to length, they are between the *short letters* and the *extended letters*.

96. What is the hight of t, d and p above base line?

Two spaces.

97. How far do the p and q drop below base line?

One and one-half spaces.

98. Will you measure and analyze the small t*?*

Main hight, two spaces; first curve joins descending straight line one space above base; entire width, two spaces; hight of final curve, one space; distance of cross stroke below top, one-half space; length of cross stroke, one space.

Analysis: Principles, 2, 1, 2, 1.

99. How should the small t *be formed?*

Begin on base line and ascend with a right curve on connective slant, one space, and continue with same curve on main slant, another space; at top unite squarely, and descend with a straight line on main slant, covering the curve one space, and continuing to base line; turn short, and ascend by a right curve on connective slant one space. Finish with a horizontal straight stroke, crossing the main part one-half space below top, one-third being on the left, and two-thirds on the right.

100. Will you measure and analyze small d*?*

Hight of first part, one space; full hight, two spaces; entire width, three spaces; opening between oval and straight line, one space.

Analysis: Principles, 3, 3, 2, 1, 2.

101. How should small d *be formed?*

Beginning upon base line, form the first curve and *pointed oval* precisely as in *a*, omitting shade; without lifting the pen, the remainder of *d* is formed like the *t*, without crossing.

102. Will you measure and analyze small p*?*

Length above base line, two spaces; length below, one and one-half spaces; first curve unites with long straight line at top; hight of finishing part, one space; entire width, three spaces.

Analysis: Principles, 2, 1, 3, 1, 2.

103. How should small p *be formed?*

Begin on base line, and ascend with a right curve a little to the left of connective slant, two spaces; unite angularly and descend with a straight line on main slant, crossing the base line one space from beginning point, and terminating squarely one and one-half spaces below; retrace lightly to base line, and diverging finish precisely like the right half of the *n*.

104. Will you measure and analyze small q*?*

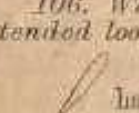
Hight above base line, one space; length below, one and one-half spaces; entire width, three spaces; width of part below base line, one-third space.

Analysis: Principles, 3, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3.

105. How should small q *be formed?*

Begin on base line and form a *pointed oval* as described in *a*; at top unite angularly, and descend with a straight line on main slant one and one-half spaces below the base line; turn short, and ascend with a slight right curve on main slant to base line, and finish with a left curve one space above, and one space to right of pointed oval.

106. Will you measure the Fourth Principle, or extended loop?



Hight, three spaces; horizontal width of loop one-half space; length from turn of loop to crossing, two spaces; width on base line one space.

107. How should the Fourth Principle or Loop be formed?

Begin on base line, and ascend with a right curve three spaces; turn short, and descend with a slight left curve on main slant two spaces; then crossing first curve, continue with a straight line on main slant to base.

108. Which are the Loop, or Extended Letters?

The

109. Which Principle is most prominent in the Extended Letters?

The Fourth Principle, or Extended Loop.

110. What is the length of the Looped or Extended Letters?

Three spaces; except the *f* and long *s*, which are five spaces in length, extending three spaces above and two below base line.

111. Will you measure and analyze small h*?*

Hight, three spaces; width of loop measured horizontally, one-half space; crossing of loop, one space above base; entire width of letter, three spaces; hight of finishing part, one space.

Analysis: Principles, 4, 3, 1, 2.

112. How should small h *be formed?*

Beginning upon base line form the *extended loop*, as just described; uniting angularly, make the remainder of the letter precisely like the right half of the *n*.

113. Will you measure and analyze small k*?*

Main hight, three spaces; width of loop, one-half space; crossing of loop, one space above base line; distance between the two straight lines, one-half space; between loop crossing and right end of small oval, one space; between second straight line and top of final curve, one space. Analysis: Principles, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2.

114. How should the small k *be formed?*

Form the *Extended Loop* as described in *h*; then, uniting angularly, ascend with a left curve one and one-fourth spaces above base, and one space to the right of loop crossing; return leftward with a right curve one-half space to a point one space above base line; unite angularly, and descend with a straight line on main slant to base; turn short and make final curve as in *u*.

115. Will you measure and analyze small l*?*

Main hight, three spaces; hight of loop crossing above base line, one space; hight of final curve, one space; main width, two spaces; width of loop, one-half space.

Analysis: Principles 4, 2.

116. How should the small l *be formed?*

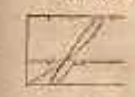
Form *Loop* as described in *h*; turn short and finish as in *i* or *u*, with a right curve, ascending on connective slant one space.

117. Will you measure and analyze small b*?*

Main hight, three spaces; hight of loop crossing above base line, one space; entire width of letter, two spaces; width of *Loop*, one-half space; width from loop crossing to dot, one-half space; and from dot to end of final curve, one-half space.

Analysis: Principles 4, 2, 2.

118. How should the small b *be formed?*



Form *Loop* as described in *h*; turn short, and finish as described in *w* and *v*.

119. Will you measure and analyze small j*?*

Hight above base line, one space; length below base line, two spaces; main width, two spaces; width of loop, one-half space; height of dot above angle at top, one space.

Analysis: Principles 2, 4.

120. How should the small j *be formed?*

Begin on base line and ascend with a right curve on connective slant, one space; unite angularly, and descend with a straight line on main slant, one space, and, changing to a gentle right curve, continue on same slant, two spaces below base line; turn short, and ascend with a left curve, crossing at the base line, and continuing above, on connective slant, one space. Finish with a light dot, as in *i*, one space above the straight line on main slant.

121. Will you measure and analyze small y*?*

Hight above base line, one space; length below, two spaces; main width, three spaces; proportions of *Loop* same as in *j*.

Analysis: Principles 3, 1, 2, 4.

122. How should the small y *be formed?*

Form the first half like the right of the *n*, *p*, or *h*; then, uniting angularly, finish with the *Inverted Loop*, as described in *j*. The *y* is precisely like the *h* inverted.

123. Will you measure and analyze small g*?*

Hight above base line, one space; length below, two spaces; main width, three spaces; proportions of *pointed oval*, same as in *a*, *d* and *q*; proportions of loop, same as in *j*.

Analysis: Principles 3, 3, 2, 4.

124. How should the small g *be formed?*

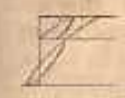
Begin on base line and form first left curve and *pointed oval* as in *a*, *d* and *q*; then unite angularly at top with an *Inverted Loop*, formed as in *j* and *y*.

125. Will you measure and analyze small z*?*

Hight above base line, one space; length below, two spaces; whole width, two spaces; width of turn at base line, one-fourth space; width of *Loop*, one-half space.

Analysis: Principles 3, 1, 4.

126. How should the small z *be formed?*



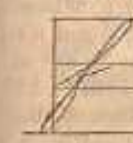
Form the first part like the left half of the *n*; uniting angularly at base line, make a short upper turn (of same size as that at top of letter), returning to base one-fourth space to right; finish with *Inverted Loop* as in *j*, with straight line omitted, and ending one space to right of turn at top of letter.

127. Will you measure and analyze small f*?*

Hight above base line, three spaces; length below base line, two spaces; entire width of letter, two spaces; width of *Loops*, each one-half space.

Analysis: Principles 4, 3, 2, 2.

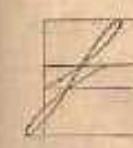
128. How should the small f *be formed?*



First form the *Extended Loop* as in *h* and *k*; then from base line, changing to a very slight left curve, continue downward upon main slant two spaces; turn short to the right and ascend with a right curve, crossing main line one-half space above base line; here unite angularly, and finish with a right curve one space above base line and one space to the right of the loop crossing.

129. Will you measure and analyze long s*?*

Hight above base line, three spaces; length below two spaces; main width, two spaces; width of *Loops*, each one-half space. Analysis: Principles 4, 4.



130. How should the long s *be formed?*

Beginning upon base line, make the *Extended Loop* as in *h* and *k*; then finish with the *Inverted Loop* and final curve as in *j* and *y*.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW.

Will you assume and describe the position for writing? Will you describe the Combined Movement, and give an example of it? What two forms has each letter of the alphabet? How many of each form? What should be the main slant of letters? How many Principles are used in making the letters?

225. How is the figure 3 formed?

Begin one and one-half spaces above base line, and descend with a right curve on main slant, one-fourth way to base line; turn short and ascend with left curve to full hight of figure, crossing first curve and completing loop; then, in a short turn unite with and descend by a right curve, one-half space; in a narrow loop unite with a base oval like that of the *Capital Stem*, resting upon base line and terminating at half hight of figure, just under the small loop.

226. Will you measure and analyze the figure 4?

Main hight, one and one-half spaces; length of left side, one space.

Analysis: Principles, 2, 3, 3.

227. How is the figure 4 formed?

Begin one and one-fourth spaces above base line, and descend on main slant with a slight left curve, one space; then, in a sharp angle, unite with a horizontal left curve, one and one-half spaces in length; from a point at full hight of figure, and one space to right of first curve, draw down a slight left curve upon main slant, crossing middle of horizontal curve, and terminating upon base line.

228. Will you measure and analyze the figure 5?

Main hight, one and one-half spaces; proportions of small loop and base oval, same as in the figure *3;* hight of small loop above base, one space; length of straight line, two-thirds of a space.

Analysis: Principles, 2, 2, 2, 1.

229. How is the figure 5 formed?

Begin one and one-half spaces above base line, and descend on main slant with a slight right curve, one-half space; continuing, form small loop and base oval as in the figure *3;* finish with horizontal straight line drawn from top of figure two-thirds space to right.

230. Will you measure and analyze the figure 6?

Main hight, two spaces; hight of oval, one space; distance between left curves, one-third width of figure.

Analysis: Principles, 3, 2, 3.

231. How is the figure 6 formed?

Begin two spaces above base line, and descend by a slight left curve on main slant to base; then, in a full turn, unite with and ascend by a right curve on main slant, one space; make a short turn to left, and finish with a left curve descending near first stroke upon main slant to base.

232. Will you measure and analyze the figure 7?

Hight above base line, one and one-half spaces; length below base line, one-half space.

Analysis: Principles, 1, 3, 2, 1.

233. How should the figure 7 be made?

Begin one and one-half spaces above base line, and descend one-fourth space with a straight line upon main slant; unite angularly, and carry to the right a left and right curve, one space, and at full hight of figure unite in another angle, with a straight line descending upon main slant, and terminating one-half space below base line.

234. Will you measure and analyze the figure 8?

Main hight, one and one-half spaces; hight of beginning point above base, one space; loop crossing, at about one-half hight of figure.

Analysis: Principles, 2, 3, 2, 3.

235. How is the figure 8 formed?

Begin one space above base line, and ascend by a right curve, one-half space; then in an oval turn, unite with a full left curve, descending half way to base; there, merging into right curve, continue to base line; turn short and ascend with a left curve, completing loop at middle hight, and extending through middle of top to full hight of figure.

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